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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Note: The editor is not responsible for opinions expressed in this department. All communications must be accompanied by the name and address of the writer.

### NURSING IN INSTITUTIONS

Dear Editor: When I read your "Editorial Comment" in the January, 1917 JOURNAL, where you asked, "What is known of the nursing care of the sick in institutions for the blind, for the feeble minded, or in reformatories and prisons," I thought I would write and tell you something of my work in the Woman's Department of the Illinois State Penitentiary at Joliet. I am a graduate of one of the training schools of Illinois, class of 1905, and a registered nurse. After ten years of private duty nursing I took the state civil service examination for trained nurse. I was sent to the woman's prison, and have been here for seventeen months. I am the only nurse in the prison. I do not have anything to do with the work in the men's prison. There is no hospital in this department, but there is a small drug room. There is a resident doctor who comes over here two or three times a week, or as often as needed. As we have no operating room, we cannot do any major operations. We had a very successful one on a hand that was crushed and burned in the mangle in the laundry. When the women are sick they lie in their cells, which are very comfortable. There is a window, a toilet and running water in each one. I know that the reform schools for the boys and girls, and the state schools for the deaf and blind all have well equipped hospitals and nurses who are graduated from the state hospitals.

Illinois.

L. L. DeP.

### SPRUE

Dear Editor: Sprue is a tropical disease to which foreigners are very susceptible; it attacks many business men and missionaries in the east. In India and Ceylon, cases have been known among the natives, but in Korea none have been reported as yet. The exact cause of the disease is not known, but considerable research work is being done to determine it; while bacteria and yeast have been suggested as the cause, mold is the most accepted theory. The symptoms are extreme emaciation, distressing flatulence, copious frothy gray stools, and sores in the mouth. In the treatment of this disease, physicians have advised diet and complete change of environment, such as leaving the tropics. A milk and egg diet, avoiding carbohydrates, is given. In the Philippines "606" has been given with fairly good results. A Korean missionary returned to America with this disease and lived in the southern part of California. After drinking a quart of orange juice every day for five months, she was reported cured. For the benefit of those who are returning to America with this disease, several physicians in different cities have made a study of it. One is located in San Francisco, another in New Orleans, still another in Chicago, and a fourth in New York City.

Korea.

D. M. B.

### AS THE PLANT, THE FLOWER

Dear Editor: It is true that the measure of civilization may most nearly be determined by the care given the child. A girl, from her earliest childhood, should prepare herself for the most sacred duty of all, the bearing of

children. To prevent muscular insufficiency, the young girl should develop herself, as does the boy, with sports such as rowing, swimming, climbing, etc., all of which will make good, strong muscles. Healthy exercise of the whole body and careful and frequent bathing should form part of her daily routine. She should not lace, for by so doing, she retards the development of the generative organs. Diet is another important factor. Strong, steady nerves are as essential as good, sound muscles, and for this reason good, nourishing food, a nerve builder as well as muscle builder, must be eaten. It has taken long years of experience to teach us that the babe needs quantities of fresh air, should not be smothered in clothing, and that nine-tenths of the illnesses which prove fatal to young children are due to improper feeding. For this reason, the important organs of lactation should be given the greatest care from earliest girlhood. There is something in mother's milk, a life-giving something, that the finest chemistry cannot find or imitate. If these few but most essential rules be carried out, I feel sure that the coming generations will be such that we may be justly proud.

Virginia.

C. G. H.

"I WAS \* \* SICK \* \* AND YE VISITED ME NOT."

Dear Editor: While acting as registrar at a nurses' central directory in one of our large eastern cities, I was amazed to learn how many exceptions the nurses are taking to the cases to which they are called. Having a good many calls from neighboring towns, to which a nurse is not called unless she is absolutely needed, I found it almost impossible to fill the demand. When I called nurses who were registered for outside duty, I would receive such replies as these: "Oh, I cannot go away out there in the country." "It is too hard." "I won't go out of the city, I told you that before." Many similar replies were received, until I became discouraged and fearful. Sometimes, after going over a list of 30 nurses, I would be obliged to call on another registry (not under the same management) to fill the call. Once, when I called a nurse who was registered for outside duty, for an emergency case, at eleven p. m., the reply was: "I told you I did not take night duty. If they get a nurse tonight, I will go in the morning." She was evidently very indignant. The patient's friends were willing to send a cab, or do anything reasonable to obtain a nurse, for they were in distress. I told the physician in charge of the case that I had about fifteen nurses on the list and could not secure one for him. His reply was: "What are those nurses for? What do they expect? Must a patient have a disease just to fit their ideas of nursing before they will accept calls?" He finished his remarks by saying: "The practical nurses are fast winning the ground passed over by the trained nurses, because the trained nurses are too independent and too selfish to see the human side of it." There are today a great many trained nurses at the head of nursing organizations who have for years struggled hard to raise the standard of nursing. Will not these younger nurses who are making so many exceptions and limiting their profession, think of their pledges, broaden their views, endeavor to aid the physician in his work, and bring comfort and confidence to the sick and needy?

New York.

A. B.

#### LETTERS FROM RED CROSS NURSES

Dear Editor: We had an uneventful trip over, for which we are very thankful, and after several days at the port, we came to our temporary head-